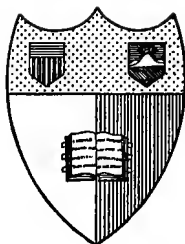


CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

ABSOLUTE VALUES
CREATIVE EVOLUTION
AND RELIGION

J. GURNHILL

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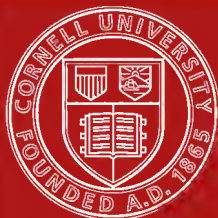
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CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

DISCUSSED UNDER THE TOPICS OF

ABSOLUTE VALUES
CREATIVE EVOLUTION
AND RELIGION

BY

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INSCRIPTION
TO MY DEAR WIFE

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF MUCH VALUED
HELP IN PREPARING THIS VOLUME
FOR THE PRESS.

EAST STOCKWITH VICARAGE,
Sept. 26th, 1921.

PREFACE

THE connection between the three subjects which form the title of this volume, will not, I imagine, be obvious to many of my readers; and my object in writing it is to show that this connection is a true and real one. I believe, with Dr. Relton,¹ that any system of thought, whether philosophical or theological, must aim at an ultimate unity of all existences.

But is there an ultimate reality, in which all our knowledge, all our experiences, however acquired, can be co-ordinated and harmonized as parts of the one united whole?

My hope is that what I have written may help in some small degree toward the solution of this question.

I should be sorry if it were thought that my volume was intended mainly, or solely, for advanced students of high philosophy or theology. This is not the case. For though some of the problems and topics may sound abstruse and difficult, I have

¹ "Some Postulates of a Christian Philosophy," *Theology*, for March, 1921 (p 119).

tried to show that they have a practical bearing on the life of the humblest citizen ; and to treat them in such a manner as to bring them so far as is possible within the reach of every earnest inquirer after the truth.

J. GURNHILL.

EAST STOCKWITH VICARAGE,
August, 1921.

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CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

PART I

ABSOLUTE VALUES

CHAPTER I

A Discursus on Absolute Values and their relation to the Spiritual
Philosophy

IN the first place I desire to thank Dr. Inge, the Dean of St. Paul's, for having given prominence to the subject of Absolute Values, and called attention to its importance in one of his *Outspoken Essays*, that on "Immortality and Survival." His valuable remarks and dissertation have led me to look more carefully into the subject of Absolute Values than perhaps I should otherwise have done; and more especially to trace their intimate connection with the Spiritual Philosophy.

MEANING OF THE TERM

Let me begin, then, with an attempt to define what is meant by Absolute Values.

What values are, we know well enough. They denote something that is considered good and desirable. But what are we to understand by Absolute Values?

A thing is said to be absolute when it has an independent, unconditioned existence of its own; when it is free from external and material restraint, or limitations of time, space, or matter. It denotes an eternal and changeless idea or principle.

We say, then, that values are absolute because they are fixed and changeless as opposed to the ephemeral and transient; noumenal and spiritual as distinguished from the phenomenal and material; eternal as opposed to the temporal.¹

IN WHAT SENSE ABSOLUTE?

But when we have thus defined Absolute Values we are still very far from exhausting the subject.

How, for example, must we regard these Absolute Values, such as Love and Truth and Beauty and the rest? We have a right to ask, What is their source and origin and author? Are they absolute in the sense of being self-caused, self-created, and independent of all personality, even that of God Himself?²

¹ In Plato's *Cratylus*, recording the dialogue between Socrates and Cratylus, the question is raised whether there are eternal forms or ideas which remain themselves absolutely unchanged. But in the *Symposium* and *Phædo*, which were written later, all doubt on this question is definitely dismissed.

² In the Platonic Dialogues they are sometimes called "Abstract Concepts."

It is thus the Dean speaks of the first three (p. 272).

"The goal of Truth, as an absolute value, is unity, which in the outer world means harmony in the intercourse of spirit with spirit, and in the inner world, peace or happiness.

In answer to such questions, I cannot entertain the view that they are *absolute* in this sense, or should be recognized as such.

Dean Inge would associate them with the ideas of the *Good*, the *True*, and the *Beautiful* (p. 272).

THE CHIEF ABSOLUTE VALUES, FOUR IN NUMBER,
GOODNESS, TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND LOVE

But there is at least one more which should on no account be omitted—the idea of *Love*.

We would say, then, that the Absolute Values are in the main four—Goodness, Truth, Beauty, and Love.

I take it that in themselves Absolute Values are only names for ideas of the moral and spiritual order. But even ideas are not self-created and causeless. They do not spring out of the earth, nor drop down, like the rain, from heaven. Ought we not rather to regard them as the attributes and characteristic expressions of some supreme spiritual Personality? And if so, ought they not to be considered in their relation to His Personal Being, and in connection with His purpose in

“The goal of *Goodness* as an absolute value is the realization of the ‘*right-to-be*’ in victorious moral effort.

“Beauty is the self-recognition of creative Spirit in its own works; it is the expression of Nature’s own deepest character. Beauty gives neither information nor advice; but it satisfies a part of our Nature which is not less Divine than that which pays homage to Truth and Goodness” (p. 272).

Creative Evolution? And the inference seems fair and reasonable, that values are not absolute in themselves, but only because they spring from, and are the characteristic expressions of the One and Only Absolute Value, which is God.

CHAPTER II

Absolute Values—What are they?¹—Plato's Idea of them—The Platonic argument as to their source and similitude—The Good—Justice—Dean Inge on Existence—Life and Consoiousness—Light—Love—Truth—Beauty

RETAINING for the present the expression Absolute Values, let us next try to ascertain what are those Values—or the chief of them—which may be termed *Absolute* in the modified sense above indicated.

There is and has been much diversity of opinion on this point, and there are several claimants for the honour of deciding.

Plato himself spent much time and argument in the discussion of it.

Let us remind ourselves of what he has said on this subject of Ideas and Absolute Values.

THE GOOD AND THE JUST

First of all, in the constitution of his *Republic*, he places the Idea of *The Good*; this is his first and chief Absolute Value.

The Idea of *The Good* is to be the crowning

¹ It is almost unnecessary to point out that the absolute, or real values of life form an extensive category, of which only the more important can come under review in this section.

glory of the whole edifice ; next to that comes the Idea of *Justice*.

It is thus that Plato in the *Theatetus* (176 a.b.) speaks of Justice : "The wisdom of man is to fly from this world to the spiritual world, and this flight consists in becoming holy and just and good. We should endeavour to flee from this region to that with all speed ; and by flight is meant to resemble God as far as possible, but to resemble Him is to become just and holy with wisdom. The truth we may put in this way. God is in no manner of way unjust, but utterly and absolutely just, nor is there anything more like to Him than whosoever among men becomes as just as possible."

EXISTENCE ?

Dr. Inge would claim for Existence a place amongst abstract values. That which has no existence has no value. But does the converse always hold good ? Does it follow as a logical inference, that all that exists has value in the sense in which we are using the term ? I should hesitate to say so.

For this reason, I doubt if the idea of Existence, in its abstract unqualified form, should be placed amongst the Absolute Values.

It may be valuable, or the reverse, according to its condition and contents, and according to the use we make of it. Should we not rather regard

it as the arena on which values are displayed and experienced. If Existence is a value, it is true also that annihilation itself is sometimes a value, when it comes as the release from a life of pain and suffering and sorrow.

But there is another and more definite expression for *existence* which is not open to the same objection and which perhaps brings it within the range of Absolute Values. It is

LIFE AS CONSCIOUSNESS

And Life, Professor Bergson has taught us to regard as Consciousness.

“As thus regarded, Life is the prime characteristic common to God and all the creatures He has made, be they physical, psychic, or spiritual.

“He Himself is the focal source and centre of all life. Nor is this all. He, through the Holy Spirit, is the ‘Lord and Giver of Life,’ to all the creatures of His hand: for ‘In Him we live and move and have our being,’ and ‘by Him all things consist.’ Life is the very bond which unites the Creator with every vital organism with which this mighty Universe abounds.”

Without doubt, then, *Life as Consciousness*, should be placed in the foremost rank of Absolute Values. And this will appear more abundantly manifest, when we come to consider these values in their transition from the ideal to the actual and pragmatical stage.

LIGHT

Though *light* is not classed amongst the Absolute Values of life—in fact it is frequently overlooked—its claim to a place in the foremost rank cannot be denied. This at once becomes evident when we consider that life without *light* would be impracticable if not impossible.

But there are other reasons why Light may justly be regarded as one of the essential attributes and prerogatives of the Deity, “He dwelleth in the light unapproachable.” The formation of *light* was the first act of the Almighty in Creative Evolution. Of all the emblems or figures used in the sacred writings, either to foretell or describe the Divine Manifestation, none is more frequent and expressive than that of light.¹

Think, too, in how many senses light is used: ideal and actual, physical and metaphysical, moral, spiritual, and religious.²

In all these departments and senses light is used, and found to be an emblem most descriptive and intelligible. Sometimes we find it associated with truth, as in the Psalmist’s beautiful prayer, “O send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to Thy holy Hill.”

Sometimes with life itself, as in another Psalm,

¹ “I will give Thee for a light to the Gentiles.” “Arise, shine; for thy Light is come.”

² “The path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

“ With Thee in the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light.”

And when at length Jesus came there was no figure or emblem He used more frequently, and found more instructive as to the object of His Incarnation and the nature of His service than that of light.

Not only did He call Himself “ The light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

But to His followers He said, “ Ye are the light of the world,” *i.e.* Ye are to reflect the light, which I shed upon you, on all the world ¹

LOVE

Love has been styled the greatest thing in heaven or earth. And, judged by its motive and constraining power, so it is. For there is nothing that is good which God or man can do that Love will not urge him to essay. Of all the noblest deeds which history records—deeds of heroism, self-sacrifice, and benevolence—it will be found that the Idea of Love has been the inspiring motive. The converse is also true. The deeds of shame, oppression, and cruelty, which have stained the pages of humanity, have occurred when the Idea of Love has faded from the soul

¹ Or as St. Paul differently expresses the same doctrine, “ To give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ Jesus ” (2 Cor. iv. 6).

and given place to the spirit of ambition, hatred and selfishness. We have heard it said that Love is strong as Death. But the comparison fails to do justice to Love. For Love is stronger than the fear of Death. And the history of civilization, and especially Christian civilization, shows how often Love has proved a blessing to mankind, and triumphed over the powers of sin and darkness.

“A gift of God ! Would man could see its worth ;
Would value it, and seek it for his own ;
Would let it rule and govern all his life.
A gift of God ! No greater power than love
Can man possess, if he would benefit
The human race, would cheer man’s heart, and draw
Man heavenward.”¹

TRUTH

If Life and Love should occupy the first and second places in the rank of Absolute Values, Truth, I think, should come next in order.

But what is Truth ? What is implied in the Idea of Truth ? Shall we not say, that the aim and goal of Truth is to penetrate below the outward, superficial, and phantasmal appearance of all things, and so to gain a sight and knowledge of the thing *as it really is*.

Every form of hypocrisy, deceit, and falsehood involves the unreal and fictitious, and therefore is a violation of the spirit and idea of Truth.

¹ Rev. C. Bailey, *Love and other Poems*.

False opinion, biassed judgment, prejudice, misconception, all are forms of untruth ; and how many are the errors and mistakes involving the most serious and often fatal consequences none can tell. The idea of truth is to the soul what the mariner's compass is to the seaman. It will enable him to steer clear of the hidden rocks of error, and the shoals and quicksands of delusion, and make his voyage safely across the troubled and dangerous sea of life.

Truth, then, I think, should come next in order to Life and Love in the rank of Absolute Values.

BEAUTY

I used at one time to be at a loss to account for the innate instinct and love of Beauty in man on the one hand, and the wonderful provision made for the gratification of that instinct in the countless forms of beauty with which the world abounds, on the other.

The doctrine of Absolute Values has made all this plain to me, so that I wonder no longer.

Let me explain.

What is Beauty as an Absolute Value ?

Dr. Inge thus defines it : " Beauty is the Self-recognition of Creative Spirit in its own works. It is the expression of Nature's own deepest character. It gives neither information nor advice ; but it satisfies a part of our Nature, which

is not less Divine than that which pays homage to Truth and Goodness" (p. 272).

To a part of this description I must respectfully demur.

Beauty I would rather prefer to call the language of God, in which He is ever speaking to us of Himself and telling us what He is. Would Jesus have pointed His disciples to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air if they had nothing to tell and teach us? I cannot think so.

In the *Symposium* Plato describes the ascent of the soul towards the perfect beauty. "Suddenly she will behold something marvellously beautiful; not beautiful by parts or by seasons, as is the case with material beauty, but itself abiding true to itself for ever."

Further on in the same Dialogue Socrates is represented as discussing with Parmenides the relation of values, such as justice, beauty, the good and things of such a kind, to the species they each resemble.

The discussion is long and somewhat intricate, which I will not follow in detail, about "*The One and the Many*." But, in the end, Parmenides asks, "Is each of these mental conceptions of Justice, Beauty, Goodness, and the like, one; and is there a mental conception of nothing? This," said Socrates, "is impossible. It is, then, of something. Yes. Of a being or of a non-being? Of a being. Is it not of some one thing which that

mental conception understands as a *One certain idea over all things*. Yes. Will not, then, that species which is understood to be *One* be always *the same over all things*. . . . But will not that, through the participation of which the similars become similars, be species itself? Entirely so.”

This, then, seems to be the conclusion and inference to be drawn. All kinds of species and real values, such as the just, the beautiful, the good, are what they are because they participate in and resemble *the One central source* from which they are all supplied.

God, who is Himself the source and centre of all Absolute Values, is therefore *the Author and Source* of all that is beautiful.

But the Universe is the reflection of His Image. His creatures must resemble Himself, and they too must share His own absolute value of Beauty.

This is to me a sufficient explanation of Man’s intuitive perception of the beautiful.¹ It is the creature’s response to the Creator’s perfection, and at the same time the mark and proof of the affinity between the two. The love of beauty is the unconscious yearning of the soul after God,

¹ As also of all true æsthetic taste.

“Beauty,” says Sister Agnes Mason, “is a part of the Nature of God; and because we are made in the image of God, because we have a Kinship with God, we have also a Kinship with beauty. And so far as this Kinship is realized and developed, and so far only, are we able to perceive the reality of beauty.”—*Essay on “The Way of Beauty,”* Longmans.

as the Psalmist of old so eloquently expressed it.
“My soul is athirst for God. Yea, even for the
Living God. When shall I come to appear before
the Presence of God ? ”

“The essence of all beauty I call love,
The attribute, the evidence and end,
The consummation to the inmost sense
Of beauty apprehended from without
I still call love.”¹

¹ E. B. Browning, *Sword Glare*.

CHAPTER III

Absolute Values regarded under their twofold aspect: (1) Ideal or Theoretical—(2) Practical or Pragmatic—Their assistance in forming more worthy conceptions of God—Who is God?—The Completion or Summary of all Absolute Values—Dr. Relton on Real or Absolute Values

THERE are two stages, or aspects, under which Absolute Values must be regarded—

- (1) The ideal and theoretical.
- (2) The practical or pragmatistical stage.

It is not to be understood that in their transition from one stage to the other they cease to exist in their ideal stage; but it is that in being adopted by intelligent self-conscious spirits such as the souls of men, they find a field of activity and usefulness they did not previously possess.

In themselves they are only purely spiritual ideas. And, so long as they remain in that stage, they are inoperative for good in the world of moral and spiritual activity such as that in which our lot is cast.

The difference is somewhat analogous to that between pure and mixed or applied mathematics. The house-builder, or mechanic, knows little perhaps about Euclid or Algebra, etc., but nevertheless he is using them day by day.

Were these Absolute Values, then, always to remain in their ideal stage? By no means. For to say so would be to divest them of their practical value for beings like ourselves.

We must ask, For whom are these Absolute Values to be of use, and how are they to become so?

These are questions which demand careful consideration.

To the first question we would reply: They are to be real values to intelligent personalities who are, or have become, capable of recognizing and appreciating their value as ideas.

In answer to the second: They are to become real values when those personalities can adopt them as rules and principles of life in a sphere suitable for their activity.

The transition or development of Absolute Values from the ideal and abstract, to the actual and pragmatic stage.

These Absolute Values, then, of Life and Love, of Truth and Beauty and the rest, must be considered in relation to personal beings: both the Divine Personality of God, from whom they spring, and whose essential attributes they are; and the human, and all other spiritual personalities, for whom they are intended and whose characteristics and attributes in a life of moral and spiritual activity they are to become.

The Divine Being is not to be conceived of as

a Sublime Love sitting aloft in the heavens, in solitary glory and with a magnificent indifference to this nether world of time and space and matter. If we believe in Him at all we must believe in Him as the Great Creator of all things.

What said Plato on this point? In the *Timæus* he tells us that God made the world, because He was free from all jealousy, and desired to share His own perfection as widely as possible with His creatures.¹ And so to the same effect, and with a correspondence which is remarkable, said one of the great Christian teachers, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights. . . . Of His own Will begat He us that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."²

ABSOLUTE VALUES AND A RIGHT CONCEPTION OF THE DEITY

The theory and doctrine of Absolute Values will assist us in forming more worthy conceptions of the Nature of God.

In the first place, I contend that the Incarnation, and the religious life and sentiment which it has evoked, should be regarded as a further extension and development of the process of Creative Evolution in the sphere of spiritual life and consciousness.

¹ *Plato and Christianity*, p. 29.

² James i. 17, 18.

All the spiritual activities of the soul of man, its instincts, its intuitions, and aspirations, are the work of the Immanent Spirit of God, Who is the Author and Giver of life.

But Absolute Values such as The Good, the True, the Beautiful, and the rest, are not man's creation, nor are they called into being by the process of Evolution. They are the timeless and eternal attributes of the Divine Being.

How, then, it may be asked has such a creature as man been brought into touch with them? This I shall endeavour to explain in Part II. on Evolution.

THE DOCTRINE OF ABSOLUTE VALUES WILL ASSIST US
IN FORMING WORTHY AND ADEQUATE CONCEPTIONS
OF GOD

We have called these Absolute or Abstract Values the attributes of God. But who is God? And in what sense is it true that they are His attributes? Can it be in any other sense than that He is a personal, self-conscious, intelligent Spirit, existing, not only as the One transcendent Absolute Value from which all other real values proceed, but by His creative energy manifesting Himself by His attributes in the works of His hands.

These Absolute Values, then, become for us the marks and characteristics of a Personal Creator. And the higher and worthier our concept of God

so much higher and more adequate should our concept become of His divine Personality.

The more we can absorb of these Absolute Values, embody and exemplify them in act and life and conversation the closer will the soul of man approach to the image and likeness of his Creator.¹ This, surely, must have been what Plotinus meant, when, as his dying precept, he exhorted his disciple to bring the God that was in him into more perfect harmony with the God who is in the All.

The following extracts from Dr. H. M. Relton's article on "Some Postulates of a Christian Philosophy" are deserving of careful consideration.

"Christian Theism lifts the whole problem up into a higher range of thought, and deals with relationship between finite (personal) spirits and the Father of spirits. It rejects an ontological in favour of an ethical relationship, and thinks *in terms of personality*, with the corresponding concepts of affinity, and kinship."²

"Christian Theism refuses to deny a measure of real freedom to the individual (finite human personality) in ethical and spiritual relationship, on the ground that communion involves duality—

¹ The process and progress of this transition could not be better expressed than by the Apostles Peter and Paul: "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness (πληρώμα) of Christ."

² *Theology*, April 1921, p. 177.

God and the Soul; that the realization of our truest freedom as a matter of experience is found in kinship with that *Other* in whom we live and move and have our being, by virtue of our difference from as much as our affinity with Him: that in communion we enjoy a real existence in Him, with such a measure of separation from Him, as may conserve our finite human personality in relationship to, though not in identity with God.”¹

The doctrine of Christian Philosophy with regard to the Divine Being claims for Him both Transcendence and Immanence. Dr. Relton finds an analogy between the human and Divine Personalities, which to some extent justifies this doctrine.

“We infinitely transcend as living spirits the material bodies in every particle of which we immanently dwell. What we are to our bodies, that God is to the whole creation—immanent in the whole, and in every minutest part, yet transcendent above the whole as the sole condition of indwelling in any part.”²

It is through the activities of personal spirits, that the real values of life pass from their ideal stage to their actual and practical stage, and manifest themselves in concrete form. The idea of Love displays itself in words and works of benevolence; the idea of Beauty in the enraptur-

¹ *Theology*, April 1921, p. 279.

² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

ing triumphs of art and loveliness. And as with the Creative Personal Spirit of God, so with the created spirit of man made to bear and reflect His image. If God were not a Personal Spirit, we might perhaps conceive of Him as a Complex of abstract ideas and values, but, were He not also a Personal Creator, such He must for ever remain, for His ideas could never have blossomed out in the real and concrete values of human life.

This important aspect of the real Values, I think, has been well and tersely described by Dr. Relton.

“Values, then, so we suggest, are meaningless if divorced from a Personal Life, in which they inhere, and for which they have meaning ; in other words, Christianity is truest to Life when it stakes its claim upon the supremacy of Personality, Human and Divine.”¹

¹ *Theology*, Ibid., p. 184.

CHAPTER IV

A Digest of Walter Pater's Treatise on the Platonic Doctrine of Ideas
and Absolute Values—Observations thereon ¹

PLATO'S "ideas" are not mere abstractions—for an abstraction is a form that our thought makes use of for the sake of convenience. But an abstraction is something that has really *less* interest for us than the particular concrete instances—bravery, than a brave act.

But still, the more we know about abstractions the more interesting do particular concrete instances become, *e.g.* the more we know about Geology the more interesting would any particular belemnite become.

The Platonic doctrine of Ideas is not so much a doctrine as a way of speaking or feeling about certain elements of the mind—a poetic way of thinking, and scarcely a definite statement of theory.

General notions (*i.e.* abstractions) become in Plato's theory of ideas *separable entities* from the particular and concrete instances from which we

¹ For this Digest I am indebted to my son, the Rev. C. J. Gurnhill. I had hoped still further to curtail it, but I am convinced this cannot be done without serious injury to its value as a whole.

have gathered them. The "ideas" of Plato are these universal definitions as seen in Plato's own peculiar way, in his house of thought.

Hitherto, in the Socratic disputations, the ideas had been creations, serviceable creations, of men's thought, of our reason. With Plato, they are the *creators* of our reason; no longer are they the *instruments* by which we tabulate and classify and record our experience—mere "marks" of the real things of experience, but are themselves rather the proper objects of all true knowledge, and a passage from all merely relative experience to the "absolute." In proportion as they lend themselves to the individual, in his effort to think, they create reason in him; they reproduce the eternal Reason for him.

This is the first step of Platonic transcendentalism.

In the second stage we see that Plato instinctively finds *anima*, the condition of personality, in whatever preoccupied his mind: he locates the movements of a Soul like his own in every object which impresses him with a sense of power (cf. animism), just as the primitive savage sees the power in a gun, and immediately thinks it is alive.

"To speak, to think, to feel about abstract ideas as if they were living persons; that is the second stage in Plato's speculative ascent. Abstract ideas themselves became animated,

living persons, almost corporeal, as if with hands and eyes."

"Thus the idea of Beauty becomes for Plato the central idea; the permanently typical instance of what an idea means, and just as Beauty is the clearest, the most visible thing in the world (lovers will always tell you so)—real with the reality of something hot or cold in one's hand—it also comes nearest of all things, so Plato assures us, to its eternal pattern or prototype."

Philosophers are *lovers* of truth, and of *that which is*—impassioned lovers.

This is the "enthusiasm of the Ideas."

Thus Plato voyages towards that "intelligible world"—opposed by him so constantly to the visible world—in which the ideas become veritable persons.

For him the Socratic "universals," the notions of State, Tree, Justice, Couch and the like, are become, first, things in themselves—the real things; and secondly, persons, to be known as persons must be, and to be loved for the perfections, the visible perfections, we might say—intellectually visible—of their being.

"It looks upon Justice itself; it looks upon Temperance, upon Knowledge, as personal entities."

OBSERVATIONS

We see from the foregoing Digest what was Plato's theory, or doctrine, of Abstract ideas, and their particulars—for example, the idea of Beauty, and the concrete expression of the idea in beautiful things.

This corresponds, to a certain extent, with the doctrine of Absolute Values in their two stages, the ideal and the actual or concrete, as held and taught by the Spiritual Philosophy.

As to the origin or source whence these Abstract ideas and Absolute Values proceed, Plato made no definite pronouncement. Nevertheless, it is evident that his view or theory underwent a course of development, until at last he came to regard these Abstract ideas as possessed of a superhuman or divine character, and even personality.

And it is at this point where we notice a divergence between his view and doctrine and that of the Spiritual Philosophy, which is that also of Christian Philosophy and Religion.

For, according to the latter, Absolute Values, so called, are of a Divine Order, and instinct with a Divine Nature, inasmuch as they are emanations from and attributes of the Divine Being Himself.

But they are not to be regarded as distinct personalities, but only expressions of the One Absolute Value which is the Personality of God.

PART II

CREATIVE EVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

Creative Evolution and Absolute Values—Increasing Consciousness of Environment, the mark and index of Evolution—Bergson's *Élan Vital* in reality the Creative and Immanent Spirit of God—Balfour on Creative Evolution

IN the first part of this work we have been discussing the subject of Absolute Values with the view to discover, if possible, their nature and origin. In this Part II. I propose to consider the same subject with reference to man as the product of God's method of creation by Evolution.

Creative Evolution, as the late Professor Romanes demonstrated, has from the first displayed itself in a double form of Activity and Vitality: the first, material, physical, and physiological; the second, mental, psychic, and spiritual.

In these two parallel streams or columns creative energy has been chiefly manifested. Not that the two streams never combine or intermingle, but that in their main and essential characters they are distinct.

But there are some very important points of

difference between them, which must not be lost sight of.

Vital organisms of the purely natural and physical order may possibly have reached their highest point of physiological development under Creative Evolution. Many species we know have done that and again disappeared. But the same rule does not invariably hold good in the other—the psychic and spiritual order. The *genus homo* is a notable exception. In the human race alone of all terrestrial creatures has the stream of consciousness been flowing onward and upward in ever-increasing volume as the soul of man has become more and more conscious of his environment, and of those Absolute Values which form such an important part of his spiritual environment.

Moreover, to the extent and duration of this onward and upward progress no limit can be assigned, because the values themselves are limitless. The Truth is the truth of God, which embraces all Knowledge and all reality, the Love is the love of God which is over all His works and passeth knowledge, and the Beauty is the beauty of God which filleth heaven and earth with His glory.

CREATIVE EVOLUTION AND ABSOLUTE VALUES

The process and progress of Evolution, as reaching its climax so far in man, has ever been marked by a growing consciousness of his environment, not only in regard to his physical and sensuous,

but still more in regard to his metaphysical and spiritual surroundings. And amongst the latter we must reckon what we call the real and Absolute Values of life. As I have already observed, man does not create them, Evolution does not call them into being. But man, through the growth of consciousness, is enabled to perceive, to appreciate, and admire them.

And herein is the marvel and glory of that Creation that it has evolved a creature such as man with mind and soul able to perceive, admire, and assimilate those Absolute Values, which in truth are the Ideas and Attributes of God.¹

CREATIVE EVOLUTION, ABSOLUTE VALUES AND CONSCIENCE

Of all the results which have accrued to mankind under the process of Creative Evolution, there is none, I think, which bears more clearly the marks of its divine origin and inspiration than this gift or faculty of Conscience. There is none, moreover, in which the claims of Philosophy and Religion are more clearly and closely associated.

For if life be consciousness, and Creative Evolution in its psychical aspect means the gradual and ever-increasing growth in conscious-

¹ "The capacity to apprehend the Eternal Ideas mark the soul of man off as akin to the Eternal world which is its real home."—W. Temple's *Plato and Christianity*, p. 17.

Cp. "There is a spirit in man : and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job xxxii. 8).

ness, then the Conscience is the very acme and high-water mark, so to speak, of psychic and Spiritual Evolution, because it recognizes and approves those Absolute Values which are the characteristics of the Deity Himself. With such a faculty may we not truly say, that man bears the mark and impress of his Divine Creator?

NATURE OUR FIRST TEACHER ABOUT GOD

Nature I hold to be our first teacher about God.¹ And this doctrine of the Divine Immanence in the Universe, coupled with that of Creative Evolution, has explained to me many problems connected with the moral and spiritual faculties of man, which I failed formerly to understand.

INSTINCT AND INTUITION

Take, for example, (1) the presence of *Instinct* in the vegetable and animal worlds, and (2) *Intuition* in mankind.

I. *Instinct*²

What widely different theories have been advanced to account for *Instinct*.²

¹ That this is true seems abundantly proved by the fact that there is hardly a single race of men discovered, so far, which does not possess some rudimentary forms of Faith and Worship. It should also be remembered how Jesus ever pointed His disciples to Nature to teach them about God.

² From Lat. *in* and *stigare* and *stingnere* = to prick and then to insert by pricking. Root *stig*. Derivatives, *instinct*, *distinguish*, *extinguish*, *stick*, etc.

(1) That it was acquired in some pre-natal stage of existence; which, beside being mere hypothesis, explains nothing, but only throws the difficulty of explanation one step further back. (2) That it is inherited reason, which sounds very like putting the cart before the horse. Let those who hold this theory watch a garden spider constructing its web with mathematical accuracy and engineering skill, and then ask themselves, "Was this done by inherited reason?" I shall be surprised if they do not abandon their theory once and for ever. (3) Doubtless instinct is subject to the general law of heredity which prevails in so many departments of biology and psychology. But I imagine its true source must be the same as that which explains the gradual development of consciousness in all vital organisms; namely, the active impulse and inspiration of the Immanent Spirit of God.

II. *Intuition*¹

What is Intuition? I have sometimes found it difficult to gather from a book of philosophy what the writer himself understood by the word. And yet it is a word of immense importance in the psychic and spiritual evolution of mankind. It is, we believe, a faculty peculiar to man, which is not

¹ From Lat. *in* = upon or into, and *tueri* = to look. Hence *tutor*, *tuition*, and *intuitive perception*. In *Mod. Philos.*: The immediate apprehension of an object by the mind, without the intervention of any reasoning process.

possessed by any creature below him in the terrestrial scale of life.

Instinct is wonderful. But Intuition is far more so; for it is the power of direct spiritual insight into the reason of things, which is acquired neither by knowledge nor experience, and which is therefore superior to both.

How, then, are we to account for the possession by man of this wonderful faculty? I confess I see no way but to regard it as a Divine gift imparted to the spirit of man by the Creative and Immanent Spirit of God.

Under the continuous and cumulative action of the process of Evolution, which Prof. Bergson terms the *Elan Vital*, but which we Christians hold to be in reality the work of the Immanent Spirit of God, Consciousness in man has reached its climax so far, not only in the intuitive perception of Absolute Values, but in the consciousness of God Himself.¹

Thus do science and philosophy unite in confirming the substantial truth of Holy Scripture, that God made man in His own image and likeness, and the *Via hominis* has led him to the *Visio Dei*. Hence Natural religion in mankind.

Hence the religious instinct and aspiration of the Hebrew psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven

¹ The Psalmist of old realized all this, as we gather from Ps. cxxxix., which reads like an anticipation of the modern doctrine of Creative Evolution.

but Thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My heart and my flesh fail me, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." "How dear are Thy counsels unto me! Oh, how great is the sum of them!"

Such is the teaching of the Spiritual Philosophy. Evolution, physical and psychic, leads us up to man. And man with his soul and spiritual faculties and aspirations becomes a revelation of God. But all through there is the operation of the *Elan Vital*, the Immanent Spirit of the Almighty.

The following passages in A. J. Balfour's essay on "Creative Evolution"¹ are so apposite, that I cannot forbear to quote them.

"Let it suffice to say, that I see in the whole evolution of life on our planet an effort of this essentially creative force to arrive, by traversing matter, at something which is only realized in man, and which, moreover, even in man, is realized only imperfectly."

Again—

"I doubt that the evolution of life will ever be explained by a mere combination of mechanical forces. Obviously there is a vital impulse (what Prof. Bergson has named the *Elan Vital*): what I was just calling an impulse toward a higher and higher efficiency, a something which ever

¹ *Hibbert Journal*, October 1911, pp. 38 and 40.

seeks to transcend itself, to extract from itself more than there is—in a word to create. Now a force, which draws from itself more than it contains, which gives more than it has, is precisely what is called a *spiritual* force; in fact, I do not know how, otherwise, spirit is to be defined.”

And, lastly, on p. 43 he states the conclusion of his argument thus.

Assuming the truth of the foregoing, “ We shall have no repugnance in admitting that in man, though perhaps in man alone, consciousness pursues its path beyond this earthly life.”

CHAPTER II

Two principles or energies involved in Creative Evolution, Matter and Spirit, and their relation to each other—Prof. Bergson's view—Dr. Temple on the Atomic Theory, and subsequent developments—Electrons and Radio-Activity—The two Energies not antagonistic, but complementary and contributory factors in Creative Evolution

WHEN we look within ourselves to ascertain, if possible, what we are, our introspection assures us we are vital organisms, not of a simple nature, but wonderfully compounded of two elemental principles. Let us call them matter and spirit, body and soul; the first physical and material, the second metaphysical, psychical, and spiritual.

But the discoveries of science, especially of Geology and Biology, and the study of Spiritual Philosophy, lead to and support two inferences or conclusions: first, that all vital organisms, and ourselves as the most highly-developed examples, have been elaborated under the system of Creative Evolution; and, second, that this system is the result of the continuous and harmonious co-operation of these two forms of energy, matter and spirit.

PROFESSOR BERGSON'S VIEW

On this point of the relation in which these two principles or energies of Matter and Spirit stand to each other, I am sorry to say I cannot entirely agree with the antagonistic view adopted by Prof. Bergson, viz. that the two are hostile and opposed to each other. Matter, he says, is that force which descends and is destructive of life; Spirit is that which ascends and generates life. Only by one narrow channel or outlet, that of humanity, has Spirit been able to make its escape through the opposing mass of matter, to continue its onward and upward course of vital development. But I still cherish the hope of ultimate agreement with Prof. Bergson on this important point. For the Spiritual Philosophy, of which I hold him to be the champion, ought to be able, I think, to reconcile the rival claims of two such essential contributory factors to Creative Evolution.

NOTE.—When I wrote the foregoing section on the relation of Matter and Spirit to each other, I had not read Dr. W. Temple's Lecture on the same subject delivered in the Church House last October before the Guild of Health. Now that I have read it I am pleased to find that in the main points his view is almost, if not quite, identical with my own. The following brief extracts will show that this is the case.

DR. W. TEMPLE'S LECTURE

"The old Greek Atomic Theory held that atoms differed only in such qualities as hardness and softness, roundness and angularity. The atom remained as an indivisible unit until quite lately, and consisted of ninety-two different kinds of elements. Then there came the electrical investigation of matter and the atom was dissolved into *electrons*. Every atom was regarded as a solar system, but without a sun. That, in turn, was now being modified by the discovery of *radio-activity*."

"What we meant by mind and spirit we knew to some extent by the activities of our being. What was claimed when we said that there was a spiritual power behind the spiritual universe, was, that there was behind this universe something akin to the spirit in ourselves. That implied Theism ; it meant that this universe was rational in its ordering. There was a correspondence between it and Mind.

"Spirit had always to express itself in matter ; spirit came to itself through taking possession of matter and using it. The Christian view was neither materialist nor spiritualist in this special sense. The Christian view of life was sacramental : that matter could be taken and used by spirit as its instrument. There were certain persons (materialists) who would repudiate this ; believing that spirit and matter were opposed.

"There was no antithesis of spirit and matter. We only knew what matter could do when spirit began to dwell in it, and we were now learning far more of what was possible in the way of spirit dwelling in matter, and shaping it for its own needs."¹

¹ See the *Guardian*, October 15, 1920, p. 961.

THE TWO ENERGIES

These two forms of Energy, Matter and Spirit, though they are distinct and diverse, are not opposed or antagonistic, for both are co-operant and harmonious factors in the method of Creative Evolution.

If this be so, the logical inference is that they both proceed from the same Source, which can be none other than the Creator Himself who is at once Transcendent above all things and Immanent in all things.

But though they are thus united we must not suppose they are of equal value.

Spirit, as the home and source of intelligence, thought, and will, is supreme. Matter, with its inherent physical energy, is but the instrument and material made use of by the Creator Spirit for His Self manifestation, for the embodiment and expression of His design, and the working out of His will.

CHAPTER III

Materials at our command for a system of Spiritual Philosophy—The
Elan Vital of life—The Creator both Transcendent and Immanent—
Homo Speculum Dei

“Give me a fulcrum,” said Archimedes, “and I will lift the earth.” Similarly I think the seeker after Truth might say, Give me a reasonable soul, perceptive and conscious of its environment, and it will be possible to construct a System of Philosophy which will go far to account for, and explain the Universe.

Of course this sounds like the foolish boast of a visionary enthusiast. And yet I believe that in a certain sense, and up to a certain point, it is true. At any rate I crave my reader’s indulgence, while I endeavour to explain my meaning and justify my statement. Every earnest seeker after Truth is a philosopher. For a philosopher is a lover of wisdom, which ultimately means the Truth.

But the first question to be asked and answered is this: What means have we at our command for ascertaining the truth?

Assuming nothing in the first instance, and taking nothing for granted, but that I am a

rational being endowed with faculties of perception and observation, I find myself living in a wonderful world and in the midst of an Environment teeming with works and proofs of marvellous intelligence, power, and beauty.

How am I to account for this Environment ? How came I into it, and in what relation do I stand to it ?

It is one of the axioms of my reason, that for every effect produced there must be a Cause, if only I can find it ; and, moreover, a Cause adequate in every respect to the effect produced. Therefore, I am justified in believing that this wonderful Environment in which I find myself placed is the work of an intelligent Personal Spirit, who is at once Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Beautiful.

If we are asked what name we are to give to this Creative Energy, we would reply, it is a matter of minor importance whether He be addressed as Father Nannar by the Babylonian psalmist, or Yahveh (Jah) by the Hebrew poet, or Jove by the Greek and Latin mythologists ; for under all these names, there is implied the belief in one Supreme and transcendent Deity, whom we Christians call God.

This, then, is the first inference, which my reason teaches me to draw with regard to the Environment in which I find myself placed.

But it is only the first ; the foundation stone,

so to speak, on which the fabric of the Spiritual Philosophy is to be erected.

For I have an irrepressible curiosity and desire to know more about this wonderful Environment, about its maker and myself. I must look into it more carefully. I must go to Nature and see if she has anything to tell me on these important subjects. I must call in the aid of scientific research. I must study the heavens, which "declare the glory of God," by Astronomy; the earth, on which I tread, by the help of Geology; and life itself by that of Biology. And the result of all this scientific study and investigation has been, for me, that Nature, which is my Environment, and man himself, who stands for the highest form of terrestrial life, did not spring into existence ready made by one Almighty fiat, but by the method and process of Creative Evolution.

And the fact that under the working of this method and process, there has been produced an intelligent self-conscious being, such as man, capable of perceiving and appreciating Absolute Values, both in their ideal and practical stages, is one of the utmost significance as well in regard to the Creator God as the Creature man.

THE *ELAN VITAL* OF LIFE

If life be consciousness, as Prof. Bergson asserts, and as I believe, then Creative Evolution, from a

biological point of view, means the gradual growth and development of animal organisms into a higher and higher form of consciousness. The agency by which this gradual growth has been effected is what Prof. Bergson has called the *Elan Vital*. The name itself means nothing more than the *Vital Thrust*; but, beyond a doubt, it denotes a spiritual energy or principle which pervades the whole of Nature and the Created Universe. In short, a Creator both *Transcendent* and *Immanent*.

Thus does Creative Evolution throw further light on the problem of Creation. If Nature and the Universe be the work of a Transcendent Deity, not only must He transcend all things but also be Immanent in all things.

But not only does Creative Evolution throw light on the Nature of God, it has much to teach us about man, the masterpiece of the Divine Artificer.

HOMO SPECULUM DEI

Wonderful are the marks of intelligence and instinct in the varied forms of animal and physical life. But they are immeasurably surpassed by the marvels of man's psychic and spiritual nature. For we must remember, that this process of evolution has been going forward simultaneously in both stages or departments of life and consciousness—the physical and the psychic.

The same *Elan Vital*, which we must remember is the Immanent Spirit of God, which called into life the lichen and the amœba, at length has produced through successive increments of consciousness, extending over millions of years, the soul of man able to perceive and admire Divine ideas of Justice, and Truth, of Love, and Beauty, and which raise him to the topmost pinnacle of terrestrial creation, and bear the clearest witness to his Divine origin.

CHAPTER IV

Matter and Spirit—The most recent results of scientific research and the modifications of previous theories as to the relation of Matter and Spirit—The Materialistic Theory—The Spiritualistic modifications and revisions necessary in both, recent investigations and their result

THE recent discoveries of science in regard to the composition of matter have completely revolutionized the ideas which prevailed until quite modern times.

It used to be thought that Matter and Spirit were principles in nature diametrically opposed and antagonistic to each other. The Materialist held that Matter, in one or other of its forms and potencies could account for all the phenomena of life and mentality. In short, there was no need to call in any other energy such as that of Spirit to explain the mysteries of nature.

THE MATERIALISTIC THEORY

This is the Materialist's view. But, like the atomic theory, it is bound to disappear.

There is no radical antagonism between Matter and Spirit. Both are forms of Energy proceeding from the same source; the one physical, the other spiritual. Both are necessary as contributory and

co-operating factors in carrying on the work of Creative Evolution, though each has its function and sphere of operation. To use a familiar illustration: Matter may be compared to the plastic clay in the hands of the potter, which he moulds according to his will to *give* expression to his purpose and design. And the Potter is the Immanent Spirit of God, who is the *Mens Creatrix*, the Lord and Giver of life.

THE SPIRITUALISTIC THEORY

The Materialist must give up his idea that matter will suffice to account for all the forms of energy, all the phenomena and noumena of which we are conscious in our varied and complicated Environment both physical and metaphysical. And the Spiritualist must cease to regard Matter as a principle in nature, obstructive and repressive to the upward tendency and aspiration of spiritual life.

RECENT DISCOVERIES

This change in the scientific opinion and belief as to the constitution of Matter is of such great importance in several respects, that the following account of the steps by which it has been brought about will not, I hope, be deemed superfluous.

To Clerk Maxwell, who was one of the first to devote himself to this branch of natural science, we owe the more modern ideas of the nature and

composition of Matter. As to the size of a molecule, consisting of the combination of two or more atoms, Sir Arthur Rucker and others calculated the thickness of a molecule to be not more than two-millionths of an inch. Light, which at one time was thought to be immaterial, was found to be composed of molecules of almost infinite tenuity, and was calculated to be able to exert a pressure on the earth of 70 million tons.

RADIANT MATTER

Then came Sir W. Crookes with his wonderful discoveries made by passing electric charges through vacuum bulbs or tubes.

He ascertained that these charges exercised the same pressure as light from the rays of the sun. He also discovered that something was flying across the bulb, which was neither molecules nor atoms, but a new form of Matter—the Fourth State; neither solid, liquid, nor gaseous, but, as it has been named, *Radiant Matter*. It was afterwards discovered that this Radiant Matter was the very material of which atoms themselves were composed, and which, therefore, was held to be the basis of the Matter out of which the whole Universe is built up.

RADIUM

Next came the discovery of that remarkable substance Radium, which is always giving out

heat and energy, without apparently receiving any. The matter thrown out appears to be of three kinds. (1) Atoms of Helium, a substance rare upon the earth, but abundant in the sun. (2) Rays which seemed like light, but were not light, and were afterwards found to be the same as the radiant matter of Crooks' vacuum bulbs. (3) Rays of a still lighter character and believed to be the same as the Röntgen rays.

Such is a very brief and imperfect sketch of the history of the atom and the discovery of the elements of which it is now believed by the best scientists to be ultimately made up.

And the result and conclusion from all this scientific investigation which is of most interest to us in our present enquiry is this : that matter eventually turns out to be a form of energy (physical) owing to the incredible speed at which the electrons are moving and revolving within each atom.

The Atom has had to yield its position of supremacy to the Electron and Radio-activity. And whether that is the final word, who shall say?

But what we must admit is, that it has compelled us to revise our previous notions and theories in some important points, as to the nature and composition of matter. We must not talk of Atoms and the Atomic Theory, but of Electrons and Radio-activity. Matter is no longer to be thought of as very minute particles of solid substance, such as wax, or carbon, but as "a form

of physical energy." And beyond that definition we do not seem for the present able to go.¹

¹ "On this (the most modern) conception of the Atom as consisting of groups of corpuscles, revolving in concentric rings or spheres and arranging themselves in such rings, according to their number and speed, we can explain many or most of the phenomena of Atoms."—*Popular Science*, Part II. p. 1268.

PART III

RELIGION

CHAPTER I

Connection between Values, Creative Evolution and Religion—The argument—What is Religion?—Man a religious animal—Birth of the religious instinct

I SHOULD be much disappointed if any of my readers failed to grasp the reason which has led me to couple together the three topics of Absolute Values, Creative Evolution, and Religion, which form the subjects under discussion in this volume. They may seem to differ widely, but, in fact, they are closely connected as integral parts of a system of Philosophy which embraces them all. Moreover, we can scarcely fail to observe a law of progressive development running through them all, and binding them together in still closer union.

Thus, for example, Absolute Values lead us to the contemplation of the Nature and Attributes of the Divine Being, the one and only Absolute.

In Creative Evolution we behold this Being, stepping forth, so to speak, and manifesting

Himself, and His attributes in countless forms of beauty and goodness, and calling into existence spirits like Himself capable of bearing His image and responding to His love.

Religion is the subject which is necessarily brought under our notice, when we come to consider the relation in which the two previous subjects stand to each other, the Creator and the creature, the Life-giving Spirit of God, and the life-bearing Soul of Man, the Divine and Human Personalities.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE ARGUMENT

Creative Evolution has for its mark and index an ever-increasing consciousness of Environment, and that, not only as consisting of the physical phenomena perceived by the senses of the body, but still more of the spiritual noumena, the metaphysical facts which only the faculties of the mind and the soul of man can perceive. Amongst the latter we must certainly include what are termed the Absolute or real Values of human life.

These Absolute Values, such as Love and Truth and Justice and Beauty, I have already endeavoured to show must be regarded as essential attributes and characteristics of the Deity, and therefore, like Himself, infinite and eternal.¹ We

¹ Dean Inge calls them *supra-temporal*. "These Values are eternal and indestructible."—*Outspoken Essays*, p. 272.

call them Absolute Values because He is Absolute, and the One and Only Absolute, and they form part of His Nature.

WHAT IS RELIGION ?

Various definitions have been given of it. And even the derivation and etymology of the word has been the subject of debate. Cicero connected it with *relegere*, "to read over again." Another later and more probable view favours a verb of similar sound but quite different meaning, *religare*, "to bind over or back." This latter view certainly accords better with the meaning the word bore in its earliest usage, to denote a state of life bound by monastic vows, or even matrimonial ties. A *religious man* was originally a man thus bound ; and, then, a man in *holy orders*.

Religion has been called the people's metaphysic. And this is true in a certain sense ; for religion itself is based on metaphysical doctrines and truths, without which it could not exist. And religion, we may say, is the expression of those doctrines and truths in language "understood of the people."

Again, man has been termed a religious animal, because of all animated and sentient terrestrial creatures he is the only one that has come to possess religious instinct, sentiments, and aspirations. Such has been the result and climax of

Creative Evolution that it has brought the soul of man into a possible union and communion with the Parent Spirit of God.

Nor must we lose sight of the fact that this religious instinct in the soul of man is one of the most powerful and convincing witnesses to the existence of a Divine Being from whom all life proceeds and Who is the Father of the spirits of men.

Let us now turn to consider briefly what light the Spiritual Philosophy can throw on the birth of this wonderful instinct.

Life means consciousness and response to environment. It is evident, too, that as animal life has assumed higher forms, these, too, have increased in range and perceptive power. The consciousness of lower forms was limited to the physical and material objects of their environment. But as the perceptive and discriminating power increased in the soul of man he became conscious of metaphysical and spiritual truth and reality.

BIRTH OF THE RELIGIOUS INSTINCT

As Creative Evolution is the history of the birth and gradual development of consciousness, which is life, proceeding from the Spirit of God, who is the Lord and Giver of life; so this gradual increase of consciousness has ever been bringing man to a fuller and clearer perception of his

environment, physical, moral, and spiritual: that is, into a closer touch with God, and a deeper insight into and appreciation of those Absolute Values, which are His essential and characteristic attributes. And this in turn discloses the scientific reason, if I may so term it, why Religion is so great a boon and blessing to mankind when practically accepted as the rule of life.¹

¹ The following extract from H. G. Wells' *Outline of History* is both significant and instructive:—

“That curious exceptional disentanglement of religious teaching from formal education is a distinctive feature of our age; and we have traced the consequences of this phase of religious disputation and confusion in the reversion of international politics towards a brutal nationalism, and in the backward drift of industrial and business life; towards harsh, selfish, and uncreative profit-seeking. There has been a slipping off of ancient restraints, a real de-civilization of men's minds.”

CHAPTER II

Limits of Enquiry—Christianity, the Religion of the Incarnation—Its origin and antecedents—Two questions: (1) Is the Religion of Jesus consistent with the doctrine of Spiritual Philosophy?—(2) Is it calculated to advance the moral and spiritual interests of mankind?

My object in Part II. was to show how Creative Evolution, regarded as God's method of Self-manifestation, has called into existence the personal spirit or soul of man; the very climax of the *Élan Vital*, and the *chef d'œuvre* of the Creator's works. This human soul, conscious and perceptive of its environment, and capable of reasoning upon it, became at length endowed with moral, spiritual, and religious instincts, intuitions and aspirations which pointed unmistakably to, and could be satisfied by nothing less than the existence of a Personal Creative Spirit, Transcendent above all things and yet Immanent in all things.

Such in briefest outline was the general conclusion to which, I venture to think, we were led by our consideration both of Absolute Values and Creative Evolution.

And in this way, I imagine, the universal prevalence of the religious instinct and aspiration

amongst nearly all races and nations of men is best explained.

To attempt a description of even the principal forms of faith and worship which the religious instinct in mankind has led them to adopt, is of course out of the question.

My object in this third part is of a far more limited and specific character. It is to enquire whether that form of Religion, which goes by the name of Christianity, and which, to give it a more accurate description, may be called the Religion of the Incarnation, will conform to and harmonize with the demands of the Spiritual Philosophy.

The theological basis on which both the Jewish and Christian forms of faith and worship repose is set forth in outline in the first few chapters of Genesis; and a literal interpretation of the figurative, anthropomorphic and allegorical language in which those doctrines and positions are expressed is quite unnecessary. It is not the outward form, but the inner and real spiritual significance which underlies these forms, we are anxious to ascertain.

Let me briefly indicate what I conceive these fundamental doctrines or theses to be.

(a) The existence of a Transcendent Creator of all things; but Who is yet, by virtue of His Spirit, Immanent in all things, and the Lord and Giver of life to all His creatures.

(b) A gradual method or process of creation, which has reached its climax in the soul of man, through successive increments of spiritual and psychic consciousness, so that it is not untrue to say, that man, as we know him, has been made "in the image of God."¹

(c) The Story of the Fall, together with the intrusion of sin and evil into the world of human experience, is I humbly believe one of the mysteries beyond our power of solution and which we must accept in faith and humility, until we receive more light. But we may go a step further and say, that the existence of good and evil, and generally the positive Good and the negative Evil, which form so large and so real an element in our environment, is both in the Jewish and Christian Revelations represented as the very condition and medium through which we may advance upward to perfection.

Without attempting to recapitulate the arguments on which our conclusion must be built up, let it suffice if I briefly summarize the main points in the discussion.

1. Nature, including therein all that is known, or can be known of the Cosmos, whether the Microcosmus within, or the Macrocosmus without ourselves, must ever be our *First Teacher* both in Philosophy, Theology, and Religion.

2. Nature, through the process of Creative

¹ Cp. also Gen. ii. 7, "God breathed into man's nostrils," etc.

Evolution, due to the Energy of the Immanent Spirit of God, has resulted in the momentous fact of the personal, intelligent, self-conscious soul or spirit of man, endowed not only with religious instincts, intuitions, and aspirations, but also with ethical or moral perceptions and discriminations between good and evil, right and wrong. A crucial and convincing proof of this fact is afforded us in the sacred writings of Babylonia and Chaldæa.

3. The Hebrew and Jewish system of Religious belief and practice was really the outcome and more definite expression of the religious sentiments implanted in the personal souls of men by the Immanent Spirit of God the Author and Giver of life.

4. Christianity, the Religion of the Incarnation, we may truly describe as the legitimate Heir, the further development and fuller realization of the hopes and promises held out to mankind in the Old Testament Scriptures.

5. Now if this be a faithful record of the credentials with which Christianity has been handed down to us, I ask is there any alternative for the candid enquirer after truth but to confess that, indeed, there is no other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved, but only the Name of the Lord Jesus.¹

Such, I believe, is the main conclusion to

¹ Acts iv. 12 and 1 Cor. iii. 11.

which we are brought, by observation and consecutive logical reasoning upon the two incontestible facts of man and his environment.

Men may scorn and scoff at Religion as though it were outside the realm of Philosophy ; but, nevertheless, it is true that Religion is the legitimate offspring and the very climax of true philosophy. For Religion opens out a field for the limitless growth and expansion of that consciousness, which forms the chief characteristic of life, and reaches its fullest development, so far, in the spirit and soul of man ; a field in which he may ever and eternally become more and more perceptive and possessed of those Absolute Values which are the characteristics of God Himself.

CHAPTER III

Section I. : Characteristics of Christianity—Section II. : The Religion of Jesus long foretold and anticipated of the spiritual order—The Incarnation and its import.

CHRISTIANITY is more than a religion. It is, more correctly speaking, a religion based upon, and springing from a Philosophy, and that the Philosophy of Spirit. Nature and the facts of the Universe, which form our environment, are its starting point. Behind and within them we see both energy and intelligence, which demand a Spiritual Power and Personality to account for them. If we can be sure of anything, we are sure that these things must have a Cause. And that Cause Christianity claims for its God.

SECTION I. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIANITY

The Religion of Jesus is indeed a remarkable Religion in several respects. It consults for the welfare and happiness of man, not merely as a creature born to spend a few years more or less on this earth, and then fall back again into the soil from which it sprang; but as an immortal soul endowed with instincts and faculties which fit him and bespeak for him an existence after this life in a higher sphere of spiritual activity.

For consider: if man has somehow developed into a being endowed with such moral and spiritual faculties that he can perceive and appreciate those real and Absolute Values, such as love and truth and beauty, in preference to the sensuous and ephemeral values of this earthly life, then the Religion of Jesus is that which above all others tends to encourage and foster the growth of mankind in these higher values. Jesus lost no opportunity of placing His imprimatur upon them by word or deed.

Is life itself in question? What does Jesus say? "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Is it love? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But He did it for His enemies, and He said, "By this shall all men know . . . that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Is it truth? "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth." "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Again. If these Absolute Values so called are something more than abstract ideas—mere anomalies in the world of moral speculation, coming we know not whence nor why—if, on the contrary, they are characteristic attributes of a Divine Personality, a Heavenly Father; then Jesus claims to be the revelation to man of this Divine Being, this Heavenly Father; nay, more, to be Himself

the way to the Father. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. I and the Father are One."

Stupendous claims, indeed! and such as surpass the limits of human conception and comprehension; but such, nevertheless, as, when taken in connection with all that Jesus said and did and taught, His followers accept in humility and faith.

Such is the Religion of Jesus—the Religion of the Incarnation. May we not say, it is the one and only Religion which adequately meets the varied wants and capacities of human nature, for it embraces body and soul, mind and spirit, time and eternity, earth and heaven.

SECTION II. THE RELIGION OF JESUS OF NAZARETH LONG FORETOLD AND ANTICIPATED

1. The Religion which Jesus of Nazareth came to preach and to teach was claimed by Him as the fulfilment of a long series of promises and prophecies, extending over many centuries from the time of Abram, and many of them of a very specific character, pointing unmistakably to the rise of a Saviour, in Whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. "I came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them."

2. Moreover, His Religion in its theological and doctrinal aspect was an endorsement, in the main, of the doctrines which formed the basis both of the Jewish Religion and Hebrew Sacred Literature.

3. The prophecies which foretold His Advent were attributed to the Spirit of God speaking through the mouth of His prophets.¹ So when He came, He claimed to be "*the Anointed Servant of Jehovah*," foretold by Isaiah, "to preach glad tidings to the poor, and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 21).

OF THE SPIRITUAL ORDER

4. Another point that should be carefully borne in mind is this: from first to last His Religion, as He taught it, was of the spiritual order.

His Theology was that of the Spirit. "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. "The words that I speak unto you they are Spirit and they are life."

The new life He came to quicken in His Disciples was to be the work of the Spirit. By the same Spirit alone could it be kept alive and carried on to perfection, and to this end He promised an unfading supply of the Spirit to the end of time; and the blessed future they were to hope and strive for was to be one of unbroken union and fellowship with Himself. "That where I am, there ye may be also."

¹ "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II. Pet. i. 21.)

THE INCARNATION AND ITS IMPORT

What do we mean by the Incarnation? What is the correct view to take of it? I think it would be a false and mistaken view to suppose that it denoted the introduction of a new Divine and Spiritual Energy, which had not previously been in operation in the creative councils and intentions of the Almighty in relation to mankind.

“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” “I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” And “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day.” Such was Jesus’ lofty ideal of His work and office.

God had been working hitherto in the hearts and consciences of men by His Immanent Spirit, the true *Elan Vital*, the Lord and Giver of life; quickening in the human breast the consciousness of those real values which are not only the attributes of the Divine Nature, but also the brightest ornament and blessing of our human life. And ought we not rather to regard the Incarnation as a *further step in the Divine scheme of Creative Evolution*, in furtherance of the happiness and salvation of mankind, to be consummated at length in the perfect union of man with God. Such was the hope which Jesus bade His followers entertain, and for which He Himself prayed.¹

And that this is the view of sound Christian

¹ John xvii. 20-23.

Theology is abundantly evident from the utterances of the great Apostles Peter, Paul, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

It was the voice of God Who spake unto the Fathers by the Prophets. It is His voice we hear still speaking unto us in the *Incarnation*, i.e. in the Person of His Son, the Eternal Word of the Father by Whom also the Heavens and the Earth were made.

The voice is the same and the message is the same. But there is this important difference. The message must now be taken up and repeated by each of the faithful followers of Jesus. Jesus says to each one of them, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." "Ye are My witnesses in every land and to the end of time; so that My Church may be *the Catholic Church* not in name only but in reality."

"Did I come to be the long promised '*Blessing*'? Then you, too, must each one be a blessing to those around you. Did I come to comfort all that mourn, to give them the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?¹ Then this, too, must be your *rôle* of duty and privilege."

"That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and Thou in me, that they may be perfected unto one." Such was His noble conception of the work the Father had given Him to do. And such must be ours also.

¹ Is. lxi. 1-3.

CHAPTER IV

What has Jesus done for mankind ?

JESUS by His Incarnation has conferred blessings on mankind of incalculable value, which are yet but imperfectly understood and appreciated.

What are they ?

1. He has carried forward the process and work of Creative Evolution to a further and far higher stage of development, by quickening the faculty of consciousness to perceive and appreciate the real and Absolute Values of human life, truth, love, beauty, and the like, which are the essential attributes of God.

2. By His doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, He has taught us the Brotherhood of Man, which itself is the most effectual stimulus and incentive to the moral, social, and spiritual progress of mankind.¹

3. By His spotless life and example of self-

¹ If this spirit of Christian Brotherhood had been recognized and displayed by masters and men, by coal-owners and miners, in all probability the recent disastrous coal strike would have been averted. Never were truer words spoken than these, "Righteousness exalteth a nation ; but sin is a reproach to any people."—Aug. 12, 1921.

sacrificing love He has begotten a sense of the beauty of holiness, and true nobility of character.

4. By manifesting Himself to men in His twofold nature, Human and Divine; and by His relation to the All Father as His only begotten Son and to the Holy Spirit—the true *Elan Vital*—the Lord and Giver of life, He has laid the foundation on which the whole fabric of Christian Theology has been built up and centralized in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

5. The mystery of sin, indeed, remains. But by His Incarnation, and all it implies, Jesus has provided the means whereby its deadly effects may be averted, and the sinner restored once more to the favour of God, and fitted to become a partaker of the Divine Nature.

6. Another blessing which, through the Incarnation of Jesus, has accrued to mankind must not be forgotten: the manifestation of His Sacred Heart, so full of tender love and sympathy.

He took upon Him our nature, not only to show Himself “the Friend of publicans and sinners,” but of every one in sorrow, suffering, or distress. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” None so low and downcast but He can lift him up. None so friendless who may not find a Friend in Him. Where would our Hospitals and Charitable Institutions, our Prison Gate Missions and Penitentiaries have been, had not Jesus, by taking our

nature upon Him, made Himself the Brother of all men?

He did all this to show us what humanity might become when sanctified and brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Yes. And in the manifestation of His Sacred Heart, so full of love and sympathy, Jesus has conferred a boon of priceless value on the whole race of mankind.

Such are some of the blessings which Jesus through His Incarnation has procured for mankind.

When Socrates was discussing with Simmias and others the great difficulty of acquiring a clear and certain knowledge, and not mere matter of opinion, about things true and divine, he went on to say: "He who would know the truth about these matters must do one of two things: either he must learn or discover (for himself) the truth about them, or, if that be impossible, he must take whatever human doctrine is best and hardest to disprove, and, embarking upon it, as upon a raft, sail through loss, and in the midst of dangers, unless he can find some stronger vessel, some divine revelation (*λόγου θείου τινός*) and make his voyage more safely and securely."¹

In this interesting dialogue of the great philosopher, I think we detect the presence of two sentiments—confession and hope. First, a con-

¹ Phædo, 85. O.

fession of the inability of men to arrive at a true and certain knowledge of things divine without some help from above. Secondly, a hope secretly cherished, that possibly such assistance, by means of a further revelation, might be given hereafter.

I would ask, Could this hopeful expectation have been more completely realized than it has been by the Incarnation and religion of Jesus Christ, Who showed Himself to be "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" ?

If this be so, methinks there should be nothing unreal in the following expression of gratitude and devotion :

" Jesus, of Thee shall be my song,
To Thee my heart and soul belong,
All that I have, or am is Thine,
And Thou, blest Saviour, Thou art mine.
Jesu, my Lord, I Thee adore,
Oh ! make me love Thee more and more."

CHAPTER V

Immortality as involving Section A: The Resurrection of the Body—
Section B: The Immortality of the Soul—Section A: Some Texts
and teachings of Jesus—The Resurrection of Jesus, a type and pattern
of our own—Section B: The eternal life of the soul—St. Paul on the
Survival of the Soul—The intermediate state—Inferences and con-
clusions

THE doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body is more difficult to accept and understand than that of the Immortality of the Soul. And yet as Christians we are pledged to the acceptance of both.

SECTION A. RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

The former doctrine is mysterious and mystical. It is attended with difficulties we are unable by human reasoning, knowledge, and experience either to explain, or remove. But it is not to be doubted or denied on that account. What we do know is, that death means the dissolution of the union of body and soul, and Resurrection means the resumption of that union—the redintegration of body and soul, of flesh and spirit. But how that reunion and redintegration is to be brought about is too great and mysterious and difficult a subject for a detailed discussion in this

place. All I shall attempt must be to offer for my reader's consideration some of the main facts and factors which must be taken into account and which afford for me, at least, the most assuring and comforting evidence of the truth and certainty of the Resurrection of the Body:

1. The belief in the Resurrection in the sense that the same identical body, which dies and is laid in the grave, is raised up again to be reunited to the soul must, it would seem, be abandoned. The material elements which composed it may have been consumed by fire, or dissolved in water, or otherwise destroyed, so that it is not possible to put a literal interpretation on those passages and texts which foretell a bodily resurrection. Nor, indeed, is it necessary that we should. For the Preacher tells us that at death "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God, who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7).¹

The soul, or spirit, is the personal Ego and real life of man, for it is the Breath of God. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

¹ "Resurrection is the undoing of death. If, then, death is the disintegration of man, resurrection will be his reintegration. He is restored to the completeness of his natural formation, body and soul. There seems to be only one way in which this can be understood. As in life the soul, the controlling entity, gathered constantly changing elements for the construction of its organism, so we must suppose it, after death, to gather new elements, perhaps of a wholly different kind, for reconstruction. And again, as the body before death was identically the same through all its changes, so it is identically reproduced, with whatever degree of change, in the resurrection."—Rev. T. A. Lacey, "Survival and Resurrection," *Theology*, April 1921, p. 171.

SOME TEXTS AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS BEARING ON
THESE SUBJECTS

Either by His doctrine, or example, He has much to tell us as to the part the body, the soul's companion (and tenement), is destined to play in the life after death. Christ claimed not only to assure His followers of the eternal life of the soul, He claimed also to confer on the body a similar immortality.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John xi. 25).

He bade His followers expect His return, when "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth : they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

And for the further confirmation of their faith He gave them what we might call an ocular demonstration of the certainty of His prediction, by showing Himself alive on several occasions after He rose from the dead.

Before His death He had asserted His power both to lay down His life, and to take it again. And this claim He justified by His own Resurrection. But what He claimed for Himself He claims also for His followers, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Now if Jesus was what He claimed to be, and

what we confess that He was, "the Son of God" as well as "the Son of Man," is it for us to doubt the truth of His promise, or place limits to His power to fulfil it? Surely not!

This, then, must be our Second Inference: The mortal body is destined to share the life of the immortal soul. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." He who had power to rise again from the tomb of Joseph, must also have power "to change the body of our humiliation, that it may be made like unto His glorious body" and meet for the Mansions He has gone to prepare for them that love Him (John xiv. 2).

After all, our belief in the resurrection of the body will stand or fall by our faith in the Incarnation of Jesus. For, if we believe He was the Son of God, we may not doubt the truth of His Resurrection, nor the certainty of our own.¹

THE POST-RESURRECTION BODY AND LIFE OF JESUS A TYPE AND PATTERN OF OUR OWN

After He rose from the dead the connection between His human body and soul was not broken, though the former had evidently undergone a mysterious change.²

The Jesus who showed Himself alive after His

¹ See Appendix, on "The Incarnation and Modern Churchmen."

² Mary Magdalene in the Garden, and the two disciples going to Emmaus, failed to recognize Jesus at first. See also Matt. xxviii. 17, "And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted."

Resurrection was no phantom or discarnate Spirit, for He still possessed human faculties and perceptions as speech, sight, hearing. He held converse with His disciples, and on one occasion, it is recorded, he even ate and drank with them after He rose from the dead. "Handle Me and see : for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have" (Luke xxiv. 39-43).

And with the same human body He ascended into Heaven, as He foretold, "Now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24).

If, then, the post-resurrection life of Jesus may be regarded as the type and pattern of our own, the inference seems fair and conclusive, that whatever may be the nature of the life of the soul when separated by death from its partner the body, the resurrection body itself will have some features and qualities and capacities similar to those of its present earthly and temporal existence.

Even here and now we are in touch with the Infinite and Eternal. Though we are only inhabitants of this puny speck of dust we call the earth, yet, even now, the boundless Universe is our Environment, and all its contents claim our study and admiration, "The heavens declare the glory of God : and the firmament showeth His handiwork." This earth may be exhausted and become like a parched scroll ; but that such a fate awaits the Universe we cannot believe.

This life on earth is the school in which our

souls are being trained for the life beyond. Will Heaven be less beautiful, less full of happy willing service for God than earth has been? We cannot think it. And if the beauty of this lower world can fill the soul with such rapture how much more the world to come!

Even here and now the life Eternal is begun for those who have been born again of the Spirit. For, said Jesus, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

Survival cannot mean the arrest or extinction of life, but only a clearer vision of the glorious works and attributes of the Creator.

It was the Spirit of God in Jesus that quickened and raised His human Body from the dead.¹ And it will be by the same Spirit that those resurrection bodies, which God of His mighty power will provide, must be quickened and raised to life again.

SECTION B. THE ETERNAL LIFE OF THE SOUL

"The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting of the soul" are twin articles of the Christian Faith, which we are loyally bound to accept.

Let me now invite my readers to the second of them, the survival of the soul after death.

¹ Rom. viii. 11: "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus dwell in you, He who raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

In one of his remarkable "Outspoken Essays," that on *Survival and Immortality*, the Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Inge, after quoting from Prof. Pringle-Patteson that "all claims on man's behalf must be based on the objectivity of the values revealed in his experience (here on earth) and brokenly revealed even here" goes on to make the following remark:—

"In this world of values we find our own immortality" (p. 271). And a little further on: "In so far as we can identify ourselves in thought and mind with the Absolute Values, we are sure of our immortality" (p. 272).

Now I feel, for myself, that these are very pregnant utterances and that they contain a deep spiritual truth of the utmost importance to every one of us. At the same time I feel that they need a little explanation to make their meaning intelligible to, and therefore appreciated by, the ordinary reader or hearer.

EXPLANATION

What, then, is the real strength of Dean Inge's argument and assurance, that to become identified with these Absolute Values is to be assured of our survival after death, and our immortality in another and higher sphere of existence?

Perhaps we ought first to ask what is meant by becoming "identified with them."

Surely it can mean nothing less than this: that—

(a) They must be so accepted and assimilated, as to become part of our moral and spiritual consciousness. Life is consciousness, and therefore the higher and more perfect the consciousness the higher and more perfect the life of the soul, and the nearer our approach to God.

“We must accustom ourselves,” as Dr. Inge remarks, “to breathe the air of the Eternal Values, if we desire to live for ever.”

(b) These Absolute Values must be more than beautiful concepts of Divine ideas. They must find their concrete expression in the character and conduct of those who entertain them.

They are in truth “the things above,” which the Apostle Paul tells us those who call themselves the disciples of Jesus and claim to be risen with Him, must ever be seeking. The following is an extract from my Diary, June 1, 1920: “I am distressed and alarmed by what I see going on around me in the social, political, and religious life of our people at the present time. It seems to me we are drifting down to some great national disaster. I will only mention one or two causes for my apprehension: the growth of selfishness, the love of pleasure and luxury, materialism, and religious indifference.”

What can save us? What can stay the downward rush which is heading straight for disaster?

I venture to think there is one thing, and one thing only. It is the practical appreciation and adoption by the people of the Absolute Values of Love and Truth, of Justice and Beauty.

"No man hath seen God at any time." "He dwelleth in the Light unapproachable," etc. The only way in which we can know God is by those attributes in which He has revealed Himself to us.

Through the method and process of psychic and spiritual Evolution man has obtained the faculty of moral consciousness and discrimination which enables him to perceive and appreciate the things that are "excellent" (Phil. i. 10).¹

Already, true Christians are not the heirs only, but the possessors of Immortality.

"Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John ii. 2).

The life which has been begun upon earth shall still be carried forward and perfected in Heaven.

Advancing from one degree of perfection to another, and, perhaps, by the same method of Creative Evolution, he will gain deeper and more joyous insight into the Love and Truth and

¹ Ἔἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντά, lit. "Put to the test the things that differ."

Beauty of God, "in Whose Presence is fulness of joy and at Whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

THE VIEW AND DOCTRINE OF ST. PAUL ON THE SURVIVAL OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

The life of the soul, when separated from its partner the body at death, must evidently be that of a discarnate spirit, until such time as the two may again be reunited, *i.e.* at the resurrection of the body, whenever, and however, that may take place.

We find the apostle entering into the discussion of this subject in 2 Cor. v. 1-4.

Let me quote his words—

"(1) For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: (3) If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. (4) For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burthened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

By "the earthly house of this tabernacle" St. Paul, no doubt, referred to "the body"; and by "dissolved" (broken up like a tent) to its

dissolution at death. When this happens, early or late, "we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Death he regarded as the unclothing of the soul which will remain naked, until it is re-clothed at the Resurrection with "the spiritual body." "The thought," says Bishop Ellicott, "is that of one who thinks that the coming of the Lord is near."

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

The doctrine and belief in an Intermediate State between death and the general Resurrection follow as a natural consequence. Paul was mistaken in his expectation that the Great Day of the Lord was at hand. Nevertheless, however this might be, he states his confidence and willingness "rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord, which is far better."

And in this connection, the descriptive forecast of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. xii. 22) should not be overlooked.

Ye are come, says the writer, to "the city of the Living God . . . the general assembly and Church of the first-born," and amongst those who form that company, he makes special mention of "the *spirits* of just men made perfect." Though, as yet, they had not been "clothed upon" with the spiritual resurrection body, they are members

of "the general assembly and Church of the first-born," they enjoy the presence and friendship of Jesus and find their honour and delight "in doing Him service."¹

If, then, Evolution of the psychic order means, as we contend it does, an ever-increasing consciousness of our spiritual environment, it means also a closer approximation and assimilation to the image and attributes of God, which are infinite and inexhaustible. But, said our great Teacher, "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." "Sanctify them in the Truth; Thy word is truth."²

Can we believe that the spirits and souls of the righteous, which are capable of perceiving, loving, and assimilating these real values of human life, are doomed to perish as though they had never been? Is Creative Evolution, upon which the Almighty has bestowed such boundless wisdom and power and beauty, to end in such a fiasco? The idea would seem not only incredible, but even dishonourable to the loving Mind of God.

That which partakes of the Eternal must surely itself be eternal.

¹ Ps. ciii. 21.

² John xvii. 3, 17.

THE OBJECT OF THE INCARNATION

For this end the Word was manifested in human Form, to quicken and deepen our consciousness and love of the Absolute Values which are the very glory of God, and so make us "partakers of the Divine Nature."

The eternal life of the soul in its future stage of existence must also be a life of happiness and joy transcending our highest conception.

This theory of the continuous advancement of the soul secured by clearer insight into, and consequently truer appreciation of these real values of human life, have enabled me, I think, to place a truer and more scientific interpretation, if I may say so, upon several of those descriptions or forecasts of the future life which we find in the sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments. For even here, in this life, what is the source of our truest and purest satisfaction and joy? Does it not spring, I ask, from the conscious perception and appreciation of these Divine attributes, when we behold them embodied and expressed in some concrete form of earthly loveliness?

INFERENCES AND CONCLUSIONS

By the process and method of Creative Evolution we understand that the Creator has called

into being the souls of men, which are self-conscious, personal spirits, capable of entering into a close relationship with Himself. Capable, too, of understanding, of appreciating, and even assimilating those Absolute Values we have been considering, and which form some of the chief attributes and characteristics of the Creator Himself.

Such has been the result and outcome of Creative Evolution.

And now I ask, "Is it possible to believe or think that the personal spirits and souls of men, which have been raised to so high a dignity, and become sharers, in a true and spiritual sense, of the Divine Nature, are doomed to perish at death?"

Is Creative Evolution, upon which such infinite pains and patience have been expended, to end in Nihilism, or a fiasco? for, if the personal, self-conscious soul of man is to perish, what is there that will endure?

This, then, is the first Inference to be drawn : that the soul of man is immortal. And, if the first Inference is that the life of the soul is deathless and eternal, what will be our second Inference as to the nature, condition, and employment of that life? Shall we not be justified in believing that the same process of psychic and spiritual evolution, which was begun on this sublunary sphere, and has eventuated in the creation of personal spirits,

capable of entering into communion and fellowship with their Creator, the Lord and Giver of life, will still go forward to ever-increasing perfection?

If in this life we are fain to take up the words of the Psalmist and say, "How dear are Thy counsels unto me! Oh, how great is the sum of them! If I should tell them, they are more than I am able to express," can we suppose that anything less enrapturing and beautiful is in store for the soul in that higher state of existence which awaits it beyond the grave? Is the upward, heavenward progress of the soul, so marked in time, to be suddenly closed for all eternity by the death of the poor perishable body?

Such a supposition, as it seems to me, is not only contrary to our Christian Faith, but repugnant to our ideas of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. Shall we not rather believe that "the life beyond," while in some respects it will resemble our life here on earth, will far transcend it in others? That it will still be a life of active, happy service in the cause of our Heavenly Father; a life, not only of clearer, deeper insight into the matchless attributes of His nature—His Love and Truth and Beauty—but fuller opportunities for their exercise, we may not doubt.

Dr. Railton, in his excellent analysis of the main features of the Christian doctrine of "*Eternal*

Life,” says, “The life of God, and therefore our Eternal Life, is not a life of ‘sublime self-satisfaction,’ but the life of a victorious Spirit, wrestling still in the army of God against sin and death.”¹

¹ See Review of “King’s College Lectures on Immortality,” in *Theology*, November, 1920.

APPENDIX

THE INCARNATION AND MODERNIST ATTACKS UPON IT, FROM A RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHIC POINT OF VIEW

I SHOULD like to state my reasons for dissenting very strongly from many of the statements and arguments put forward by some of the speakers at the Cambridge Conference of Modern Churchmen. But this is impossible within the limits of the time and space at my disposal. I must therefore content myself with the following observations.

The attack which has been made on the Catholic Faith is of a general and sweeping character. But it seems specially directed against the doctrine of the Incarnation, as it has hitherto been generally understood and accepted. And I think, if half the destructive criticisms and arguments which have been adduced could be substantiated, it would mean casting Christianity as a revealed and traditional Religion into the melting-pot of doubt and uncertainty.

Christianity is a great religious movement. But, like all other movements, it must have a cause and that cause adequate to the effects produced. Such a Christ as that which the Modernists would have us accept, does not answer to these requirements. Such a Christ could neither have fulfilled the *rôle* predicted of Him, nor become the Founder of the greatest, purest, and most beneficent Religion the world has ever seen.

It is not that the Divinity in Jesus is denied, but His humanity is exalted to such a degree that it seems to overshadow and obscure the Divine Personality in Him.

Jesus is Divine, or becomes so, only by virtue of His moral and spiritual perfection. All men are in a measure divine, because all men, in a certain sense, bear the image and likeness of God. And Jesus, it is said, possessed a greater share of Divinity than other men, because He was more conformed to the image and likeness of God. Doubtless there is a certain amount of truth in all this. But I think it must be evident that such a theory of the Incarnation falls far short of the Catholic doctrine as expressed in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds; namely, the union of two whole and perfect natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, in the person of Jesus Christ, "not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person."

Such is the doctrine of the Catholic Church. But now we are told, "the old Orthodoxy is in ruins," and a new one must be found. And when we ask What is this new Orthodoxy, and where is it to be found? it is by no means easy to ascertain. For while one prominent speaker is indignant because his fidelity to the Catholic Faith is impugned, another speaker tells us "there must be a complete abandonment of the dualism between man and God which underlies the whole ecclesiastical system."

How, then, do the Modernists propose to restate, or reconstruct, this article of the Incarnation?

The contention is set up that Jesus never claimed Divinity for Himself; that when He used the expression "The Son of Man" or "The Messiah" or "Christ" He did not use it as denoting Himself but some other Person, who was hereafter to come, and that when He did so use it, it was a mistake on the part of the Apostles themselves; that never in any well-attested sayings of Jesus is there any evidence that His conscious relations to God were other than those of a man towards God, and that the speeches in the Fourth Gospel, where they went beyond the Synoptics, could not be regarded as historic, and may therefore be set aside. Now Dr. Rashdall is doubtless aware that the Gospel of St. John does contain abundant evidence of the most unequivocal character that Jesus did

claim Divinity for Himself. For example, "I and the Father are One," "Before Abraham was, I am" (John x. 30; viii. 58).

And so the evidence of the Fourth Gospel is calmly swept aside as "unhistorical." But is the Dean justified in this contention? From the last quarter of the second century to the last quarter of the eighteenth the writing was accepted, almost without question, as the authentic witness of the Apostle John. Irenæus at Lyons, himself a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John; Tertullian at Carthage; Clement at Alexandria, and many others, bore their witness to the Johannine authorship of this Gospel. Men like these were neither morally dishonest nor intellectually incapable. These men lived nearer the time when the Gospel was written; and they had means of enquiry and evidence on which to base their judgment such as *no modern critics can possess*.

Is the unanimous witness of our great English divines and theologians, such men as Liddon and Lightfoot, Hutton and Sanday, Westcott and Ellicott, and a host of others too numerous to mention, to be set aside to make way for a modern doctrine of the Incarnation, which in some respects bears a suspicious resemblance to the ancient Arian heresy?

What was the Arian doctrine of the personality of Jesus? "Although He is called God, He is not so in truth, but was deified in that sense in which men who have attained a high degree of sanctity may attain to a participation of the Divine prerogatives." I ask, is there not a striking similarity between this view of the Incarnation and that which underlies the statements of several of the speakers at the Cambridge Conference?

But even supposing we were to admit the contention that the Fourth Gospel is unhistoric—which means, I suppose, that its authenticity is doubtful and therefore unreliable—I would ask, will the *historic* Jesus of the Synoptics be more easy to reconcile with that view of His Divinity which the Modernists are seeking to establish?

For my part I cannot think so (cf. Matt. xvi. 16, 17; xxvi. 63, 64; Luke ix. 20, 22).

In the foregoing chapter on the Incarnation ¹ I ventured to express the opinion, that it should not be regarded as an entirely new departure on the part of Almighty God in the creation of mankind; but should rather be co-ordinated, as a further extension and development, in the now recognized method of Creation by Evolution.

From beginning to end, from the amœba to the man, that method owes its efficacy, we believe, to the *Elan Vital*, which in reality is the Spirit of God, the Lord and Giver of life. Jesus was truly man in every respect. But He was truly God as well, because that "in Him dwelt all the fulness (πλήρωμα) of the Godhead bodily." And the Christian Philosophy teaches us that He became Incarnate, through the operation of the same Holy Spirit, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God."

¹ Part III., Chap. II.

SERMON ON PSALM VIII. vv. 3-5

“When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man (*Enosh* = man in his weakness) that Thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man that Thou visitest Him?”

What a contrast!

THE CONTRAST

The infinite universe on the one hand, puny man on the other—yet both proceeding from one and the same source. Both the work of the same Divine Artificer. Both the result of the same spiritual energy—the *Elan Vital* of the Philosopher—and working by the same method—the secret, silent method of *Creative Evolution*.

And yet how widely different the result!

The one physical, material, mechanical: the result of the combination and interaction of what are called the laws and forces of Nature.

The other psychic, mental, spiritual, endowed with instinct, intuition, and an ever-accumulating consciousness of those Absolute Values, such as Love and Truth and Beauty, which constitute the very attributes and characteristics of God Himself.¹

V. 5 (R.V.).—For Thou hast made him but little (*βράχυν τι*) lower than God.

¹ “What, indeed, are the heavenly spheres, emblems though they seem of glory and permanence, as compared with one immortal soul, one self-conscious spirit which can address the Creator of All as ‘Abba Father’? They shall perish, but this remaineth. They shall wax old as doth a garment, and wither away like a parched scroll; but the soul of man contains the germ of immortality.”—*Companion to the Psalter*, Ps. viii. 4, 5.

The Scripture record of man's creation (Gen. i. and ii.) and the view which science teaches us to take appear at first sight to be somewhat contradictory. But the difference is only imaginary and superficial. There is no *real* discrepancy between the voice of inspiration and the teaching of true science. Nor, indeed, can there ever be.

For science is, or ought to be, the result of the study and investigation of Nature. And Jesus, be it remembered, ever pointed His disciples to Nature, as their first and infallible teacher about God.

"Consider the lilies of the field," etc. "Yet Solomon, in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." "Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap. Yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them." *The laws and operations of Nature are His.* "He, the God of Nature, causeth *His sun* to rise on," etc. "He sendeth rain," etc. "Not a sparrow," etc. "Be ye therefore perfect," etc. The heavens and the earth are His creation. And *He cannot belie Himself.*

He Who in the beginning created the Heavens and the Earth, made man also by a method of His own, not indeed by one momentary fiat of omnipotence, but by the gradual influence of the Immanent Spirit of God, Who is the Lord and Giver of life—the true and only *Elan Vital*.

We call this method by the name of *Creative Evolution*.

When first it began to be taught, it was received with suspicion and alarm, as destructive of the traditional belief in verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture.

But such fears have proved to be groundless.

We see now that man is a creature whose ever growing and accumulating *Consciousness*—for Life is consciousness—has at length brought him into closer touch, so to speak, with his Creator; a creature capable of knowing, loving, and worshipping God as his true spiritual Parent. Aye, and more than this, of sharing those *Absolute Values* of Truth and Love, of Beauty and Goodness which, as I have already said, form the *essential attributes* and characteristics of His Divine Majesty.

The inference.—If such has been the result of Creative Evolution on this tiny planet, what may have taken place in other parts of the Universe.

Those mighty orbs which people space, may they not have been, and still be, the birthplace and the home of intelligent self-conscious spirits like ourselves? And thus the whole Universe may be one grand Temple of the Almighty in which we and all “the company of Heaven” may unite in hymning His praise and doing Him service.

But to return.

When thus we learn to think of man, the disparity between the two members of the Contrast, which, at first filled the Psalmist with such astonishment, disappears, and the inequality between the two will appear to change places.

The marvellous beauty and magnificence of the celestial orbs is only material, temporal, and emblematic.

“They shall perish, but Thou remainest and they all shall wax old as doth a garment.”

But the soul of man is spiritual, deathless, and

eternal: a temple which may become "a habitation of God through the Spirit."¹

THE INCARNATION

"What is man that Thou visitest him and the Son of man," etc.

Even this aspect of humanity, so dignified and ennobling, so full of hope and promise for the future, fails to give us the true measure of God's love for man, and the worth of one single soul in His sight.

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son," etc.

God has ever been visiting man. "Thou visitest the earth and blessest it. Thou makest it very plenteous." Verily "He left not Himself without witness of His loving-kindness, in that He sent us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

But it is only in the light of the Incarnation that we can rightly gauge the love of God to man.

Did not Jesus, though He was God, yet love to call Himself "*the Son of Man*"? Did He not claim all mankind as His brethren? "Inasmuch as," etc.

So now we can claim a divine relationship, "For God hath visited and redeemed His people, and raised up a mighty Salvation for us in the house of His Servant David."

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great

¹ "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Cor. vi. 19).

and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature" (2 Pet. i. 4).

We may doubt if even the Psalmist himself realized the full and prophetic import of his words, "Thou visitest him." But we, in the light of their fulfilment, can see how true they were.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

Does any one ask, "Why, if man be so beloved and honoured of his Maker, so great an act of condescension and self-sacrifice was necessary in his behalf?"

Because sin has entered into the world, and death through sin.

We must not shut our eyes to the fact that there is a mystery of evil as well as of godliness which we cannot fathom; and that, only by the grace and strength which has come to us through the Incarnation, and all it implies can we gain the victory over our spiritual enemies, and attain the high destiny which is in store for those who are victors in the strife.

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the world ruler of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

And never, surely, was the call more urgent than now, that all who call themselves the followers of Jesus, should fight manfully under His banner and in His cause against the powers of darkness.

Our privileges are great; but great also in proportion are our responsibilities and duties.

England has a very great work to do for God—witness the late Lambeth Conference—and great opportunities for doing it if only she will. Work at home amidst our teeming population, and work abroad in spreading the Gospel.

Let us remember the Master's words: "Ye are the light of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bring forth much fruit. So shall ye be My disciples." But only by the united co-operation of all His faithful followers can that work be done. And if the words I have been privileged to speak to you this morning may have quickened in you a deeper sense of your high destiny and calling in Christ Jesus, and a firmer resolve by God's help to walk worthy of it, I shall thank God, for I shall not have spoken in vain.

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THE END

